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## Efficiency in Government

North Dakota State Bar Association

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### EFFICIENCY IN GOVERNMENT

The state governments of the United States in 1923 spent approximately \$892,000,000. Though the budget system is in general use, it must make provision for offices and boards and commissions which could well be spared. The state of New York alone, it is said, has one hundred eighty-seven boards, Michigan one hundred sixteen, Delaware one hundred, Massachusetts over two hundred, and the state of North Dakota has approximately sixty. Not all of these call for all-time service of their members, but they nevertheless constitute a part of the state's administrative machinery. While government is not strictly speaking a business, its problems are akin to those of private enterprise. Yet there are no standards by which to determine whether its administration succeeds or fails. If a private business does not succeed, its affairs are wound up. If an administration fails, it increases taxes. The prime consideration in private business is the efficiency which assures success. A prime consideration in the administration of state affairs is that political expediency which will perpetuate control of the administration forces, and the greater the number of boards and commissions and bureaus the better the opportunity to develop and maintain political power. In some states there has been agitation for effective administrative re-organization. Illinois, Nebraska, Washington, Ohio and a few other states, have made some definite improvements in their administrative schemes. Yet wherever attempt at reform has been made, the problem has been complicated by political considerations. When it is remembered that legislatures concern themselves for the most part with administrative problems, local and state, there is little wonder that our statute books are cluttered with measures which under more effective administrative organization would be avoided. The very inefficiency of the administrative machinery contributes mightily to legislative inefficiency, and the two combined increase, more than is commonly appreciated, the burdens placed upon the courts. There is much concern over the need for judicial reform. Whatever may be the defects in our judicial system, they cannot be fully remedied until our government in all of its branches is concerned primarily with the public welfare rather than party fortunes. Effective reform in one branch is inextricably interwoven with reform in all branches. And it means more than a change in machinery or procedure; it calls for a new attitude in and toward government.